



Critical Step Taken Toward Passage of the Northern California Wilderness Bill

July 19, 2006

WASHINGTON—Today, the U.S. House Resources Committee passed by voice vote the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Act (H.R. 233). This bill has unanimously passed the Senate twice and would designate more than 275,000 acres of northern California as wilderness and approximately 79,000 acres as a Recreation Management Area for off-highway vehicles and mountain bikes, all of which is already public land. A revised version of the bill, which is part of a compromise between North Coast Congressman Mike Thompson (D-Calif.) and the House Resources Committee, is expected to reach the House floor next week and be sent to the Senate for consideration.

“This widely-supported and bipartisan bill will ensure that one of our nation’s most exquisite treasures will be protected for future generations to enjoy,” said Congressman Thompson. “With the help of my colleagues in the Senate, Chairman Pombo and the dedicated individuals and businesses in California, we are closer than ever to signing this important bill into law.”

California Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein introduced the legislation in the Senate.

Senator Barbara Boxer said, "We are inching closer and closer to protecting more than 275,000 acres of precious California land as wilderness. I applaud Congressman Thompson for his hard work to move this effort forward in the House, and I am more optimistic than ever that we will soon see this bill signed into law."

“So much of our wildlands is vanishing, and it is vital that we preserve what remains,” Senator Feinstein said. “I am deeply proud to be part of this agreement with Senator Boxer, Chairman Pombo and Congressman Mike Thompson to protect as wilderness over 275,000 acres of California's northern coast including the King Range, one of California’s most striking and beautiful environmental jewels.”

This bill would protect public land in Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino and Napa Counties as wilderness and designate the Black Butte River in Mendocino County as a wild and scenic river. Also, it will not close any existing roads, affect private lands or alter any grazing rights, and it will designate a Recreation Management Area in Mendocino County for off-highway vehicles and mountain bikes.

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